National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property				**************************************
Historic name Other name/site number	Newton Stadium Fischer Field, 079-4000-002	26		
2. Location				
	letic Park wton KS County Harvey	Code 079	not for publication vicinity Zip code 67114	
3. State/Federal Agency Cert				
As the designated authority uprequest for determination Historic Places and meets the meets of does not meet nationally statewide signature of certifying official Kansas State Historical Soc	under the National Historic Prese of eligibility meets the document e procedural and professional re- the National Register criteria. It locally. (☐ See continuation	tation standards for registr quirements set forth in 36 recommend that this propi sheet for additional comm Dece	ering properties in the Natio CFR Part 60. In my opinion erty be considered significatents.) ember 3, 2003	onal Register of n, the property int
Signature of commenting offi	cial /Title	Date		
State or Federal agency and	bureau			
National Park Service Certificati	ion		<u> </u>	
I herby certify that the property is		Signature of the Keeper		Date of Action
☐ entered in the National Re ☐ See continuation sh ☐ determined eligible for the Register ☐ See continuation sh ☐ determined not eligible for National Register ☐ removed from the National Register ☐ other, (explain:)	National neet.			

Newton Stadium		Harvey County, KS	
Name of property		County and State	
5. Classification			
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the	ie count.)
☐ private ☑ public-local ☐ public-State ☐ public-Federal Name of related multiple property i	☐ building(s) ☐ district ☐ site ☑ structure ☐ object	Contributing Noncontribut 1 1 Number of contributing resources pr	buildings sites structures objects total
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a New Deal-era Resources of Kansas	a multiple property listing.)	in the National Register	28
6. Function or Use			au.
Historic Functions (Enter Categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
Recreation and Culture: sports fac	cility	Recreation and Culture: sports facility	
***************************************			,
7. Description			
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from instructions)	
Other: functional		foundation Concrete walls Concrete	
			r
		roof	~~~~~
		other	

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property Newton Stadium	County and State	Harvey County, KS		
8. Statement of Significance				
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for Natonal Register		Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)		
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history		Entertainment/ Recreation Social History		
☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.				
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.		Period of Significance		
D Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.				
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)		Significant Dates		
Property is:		1936		
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.				
B removed from it original location.		Significant Person		
C a birthplace or grave.	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)			
D a cemetery.	,	N/A		
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.		Cultural Affiliation		
F a commemorative property.		N/A		
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years				
	•	Architect/Builder		
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)		Knowland Brode		
9. Major Bibliographical References				
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this for	rm on one or more contin	uation sheets.)		
Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional preliminary determination of individual lising (36 CFR 67) has been requested Previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	litional data:	 State Historic Preservation Office ○ Other State agency ○ Federal agency ○ Local government ○ University ○ Other Name of repository: 		

Name of Prope	erty Newton Stadium	County and State	Harvey County, KS	_
10. Geographic	cal Data			
Acreage of Proper	ty 1 acre			
UTM References (Place additional UT	TM references on a continuation sheet.)	٠		
1 4 6 Zone Easti 2	4 4 2 2 0 4 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Zone 4	Easting North	ing
Verbal Boundary Des	scription	∐ See α	ontinuation sheet	
	ies of the property on a continuation sheet.)			
Boundary Justification (Explain why the bound	daries were selected on a continuation sheet.)			
11. Form Prepare	ed By			
Name/title	Christy Davis			
Organization	City of Newton	Date	July 1999	
Street & numb	er 201 East Sixth Street	Telephone	620-284-6055	
City or town	Newton	State KS	Zip code 67	114
Additional Docu	mentation			
Submit the following it	ems with the completed form:			
Continuation Sheets				
Maps	A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series)	indicating the property's	location.	
	A Sketch map for historic districts and	properties having large a	creage or numerous resources.	
Photographs	Representative black and white photo	ographs of the property.		
Additional items		Supplied to all property.		
	FPO for any additional items)			
Property Owner			·····	
name	City of Newton			·
street & numb	per 201 Eat Sixth	telephone	620-284-6001	
city or town	Newton	state	KS zip code	67114

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16) U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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NEWTON STADIUM

Narrative Description

Newton Stadium (1935-36) is located in the middle of Athletic Park just southwest of the core of Newton, Harvey County, Kansas (pop. 17,000). It is southeast of Newton's municipal swimming pool (1934), approximately 500 feet directly south of the Mennonite Settler Statue (NRHP) and immediately north of a football field and baseball diamonds.

The stadium, like most, is highly symmetrical in design. Being a government relief project, however, the stadium is very plain. The base of the stadium is rectangular. From east to west, it measures approximately 200 feet. From north to south, it measures approximately 37 feet. The highest point of the original structure is 24 feet. The principal building material is reinforced concrete, although some pilasters and details are made of blond brick and the original doors are wood.

Although much of the building's interior was remodeled in 1969, the building maintains a high level of its historical appearance and integrity.

North Elevation

The north façade serves as the building's principal façade. This is where spectators enter the stadium. North of the main building on the east and west sides are two small brick ticket booths. Once spectators have purchased their tickets, they may enter the east or west side via entrance gates. The gates are part of the fences on each side of the building. These match the architecture of the stadium. Each side is connected to the stadium with an angled concrete curtain wall, supported by a concrete column. The sloped wrought iron gate is hinged on one concrete column and latches to another. The column on which the gate latches is connected to another sloped member flanked by two concrete columns and two larger wrought iron gates. On the outside edge of each fence is another concrete member also flanked by concrete columns.

The main feature of the north side of the stadium is a band shell. The stage of the band shell is recessed into the stadium approximately eight feet. It is about 32 feet wide and measures thirty feet from its back wall to the northernmost point of its rounded front. It is raised approximately two feet from the ground. One may access the stage from the east or west via blond brick stairs. Two blond brick columns which extend from the base of the stadium to its press box flank the stage.

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The stadium was not originally equipped with a press box. However, sometime prior to the stadium's construction and 1969 one was added. The first press box rose 13 feet from the top of the stadium and was only 24 feet wide. In 1969 the press box was widened to measure approximately 30 feet, although it maintained its original height. The base of the press box is concrete with a wood-framed top. Within the past five years a new press box has been erected. The structure rises from the upper tiers of the stadium's center, standing two-stories tall.

There are five 15-foot-wide bays on each side of the band shell. Concrete pilasters define each of these bays. And unique details divide each bay into four unique levels. The first level of each bay, nearest the base of the stadium, is made up of a concrete curtain wall. This level extends higher up the elevation on the bays flanking the band shell. The second level of each bay originally incorporated a set of two multi-pane windows with diagonal shapes. During the 1969 remodel, contractors replaced these windows with concrete masonry units. The third level, approximately 7 feet in height, consists of a concrete curtain wall.

The fourth level of each bay was originally made up of stuccoed wood. This deteriorating wood was removed and replaced with concrete masonry units in 1969. The original builders topped the stadium with metal railing. Today, chain-link fencing surrounds the perimeter.

South Elevation

The gates on the east and west sides of the building lead the spectator to ramps leading to the seating on the south side. Spectators originally ascended to this level, five feet from the ground, via six stairs. These stairs were located in front of the stadium on the east and west sides. The concrete ramps that replaced them rise from the north side of the stadium to the original landing. This landing deck extends the entire length of the stadium.

Below this landing there is access to the interior of the stadium. This part of the stadium is separated into symmetrical parts, the west and east. Each of these sides has twelve rounded concrete openings. The second opening from the outside of the stadium on each side provides a stairway down to a small door on the lower level.

The stepped seating, which today features aluminum seats, is separated by stairs into four sections. In the center of the stadium is the central stair with its 16 steps. There also are stairs on the stadium's east and west sides. These feature 18 stairs each. Between the central and side stairs on each side of the stadium are split stairs. Spectators may access these stairs from protrusions on the front landing. These stairs each have a set of eight steps which flank a wood door. The eighth step serves as a second landing from which rises one stair centered above the door.

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East/West Elevations

The east and west elevations are identical. A brick pilaster rises on the north side of each elevation approximately 24 feet. From this pilaster extends the east and west walls. These walls angle downward at a shallow angle of approximately 30 degrees until they are 5 feet from the ground. Each wall then drops off vertically to the ground.

Each elevation is separated into three bays which are defined by concrete pilasters. The first bay, the bay closest to the north side of the stadium, is separated into two levels, each with a concrete curtain wall. The second, or center bay, originally featured a radius-topped wood door. In the 1969 remodel, however, these doors were removed and replaced with steel doors and the openings filled with concrete block. The third bay features a triangular concrete curtain wall.

Interior

Unlike the exterior, the interior of the stadium has undergone significant changes over the years. For the most part, however, these changes have not altered the general floor plan of the building. Instead, they have provided for amenities, such as modern toilet facilities, that allow for enhanced use of the structure. Painted concrete walls give the building no more of a "finished" look than it had originally.

The interior walls of the stadium coordinate with the building's fifty reinforced concrete supporting columns. Thirty-two of these supporting columns are located on the building's perimeter. The other 18 are evenly spaced throughout the interior. Some of these columns adjoin interior walls, others are freestanding. Eleven sets of columns form the building's central hallway which connects the entry doors in the center bay of the building's east and west elevations. This hallway features original hanging light fixtures. Various rooms are located along the corridor.

On the northeast corner of the building are located two rooms, an office and an equipment room. These rooms remain in their original locations with their original dimensions. Rooms in the southeast corner, however, were remodeled in 1969. The original plan was very simple. When one entered the east entrance of the building, the first room on the left was a restroom. The next was a shower room, then a dressing room, then a women's restroom.

The original women's restroom proved inadequate, however. The small 8' X 17' room included only one sink and two tiny stalls. Unable to expand the restroom farther west because it adjoined the east ramp, architect Joe Carmichael moved the restroom's east wall about ten feet east. The remodel allowed for three new sinks to be installed on the west wall and four new stalls to replace the original two.

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In order to make the changes, the architect had to take room from the dressing room area, requiring the toilet and shower area to its east to be re-configured. Whereas before there were doors leading to both the toilet and shower rooms, players can now only enter the rooms via the dressing room to the west. The alterations required the removal of the concrete wall which originally separated the toilet from the shower room and replacing it with a wall which now encloses the shower room on the north side of what originally was the toilet room.

Similar changes were made to the building's west wing. The wing originally contained a large shower area in the southwest corner, a first aid room to its east, a large dressing room, equipment room and office in the northwest corner, and a men's restroom east of the west-side ramp. In the center of the building, behind the band shell, was the concessions area.

Like the women's restroom, the original men's restroom was tiny. It too housed two stalls and a sink. Carmichael's design called for the removal of the east wall and replacement farther east, expanding the restroom from 9' X 15' to 17' X 11'. Three stalls, three new sinks and two urinals replaced the original fixtures. This alteration decreased the size of the concessions area.

The original west-side first aid, shower and dressing rooms also were changed in 1969. The walls of the original first aid room were removed and a new wall built to its east, south of the hallway. This area, which had served as the dressing room, became the first aid room. The room that had been first aid was then reconfigured, its north wall moved farther north to accommodate a new restroom with three toilets, two urinals and three sinks. The shower area remained a shower area, but new column showers were added.

The north side of a wall separating the central public area from the west locker area was partially removed and a new wall installed along the north side of the hallway to enclose a dressing room.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Newton Stadium (1935-1936) meets criterion "A" for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in that it is associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. As a Works Progress Administration (WPA) relief project during the Great Depression, the stadium is significant not only in the area of entertainment and recreation, but also in the area of economics. This nomination will be included in the New Deal-era Resources of Kansas Multiple Property Submission.

In the early years of the Great Depression, Newton, Kansas (at the time home to 11,000 people) seemed the least-likely recipient of government relief funds. In the election of 1932, Harvey County, filled with citizens who believed the Depression to be God's answer to 1920s fast-pace living, had been only one of thirteen Kansas counties to vote against Franklin D. Roosevelt. Many Newtonians scoffed at Roosevelt's "New Deal," a plan to increase employment and improve the depressed economy.

At mid decade, however, as conditions worsened, Newton's elected officials began to apply for aid money. In the first years of the New Deal, the federal government distributed aid money to the states, which then passed the money on to communities in need. Kansas' state-wide relief agency was called the KERC or Kansas Emergency Relief Committee. As the nation-wide relief effort became more organized, relief projects fell under the auspices of the Works Progress (later Projects) Administration (WPA), a federal agency whose goal was to provide work for a number of the nation's unemployed.

In four years, from July 1, 1935 through June 1, 1939, the WPA was responsible for the construction of 619 public buildings in Kansas including courthouses, schools and community buildings. The relief agency subsidized several buildings in Newton including Cooper and McKinley Elementary schools in 1938 and a phase of the construction of a new High School (now Santa Fe South Middle School) in 1939. WPA also helped fund the construction of sewers and roads.

The WPA also funded the construction of recreation facilities. These projects served a dual purpose in that they not only provided work for the unemployed, but once completed, helped satisfy the expanded leisure needs introduced by a government mandated reduction in work-week hours. Between 1935 and 1939, the WPA was responsible for the construction of 52 stadia.²

By 1935, Newton was poised to apply to the WPA for the construction of a city stadium. While relief was still being funneled through state agencies, the Newton City Commission decided to apply for funding to improve

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Athletic Park. First reserved as a park in 1898, the park was Newton's answer to the nationwide park movement. One of the park's most popular early features was a half-mile horse racing track. During the 1920s, as Newton became a highway hub, the park was used for an auto tourist camp which at its height attracted more than 2,000 cars per season.³

While the historical uses of Athletic Park are intriguing, no period in the park's history was more crucial to its development than the 1930s. Athletic Park, then at the end of its tourist camp heyday, provided the perfect location for the city's plan. In 1934, the City of Newton called a special election to issue \$30,000 in bonds for the construction of a municipal swimming pool and bathhouse.

While contractors were busy completing the swimming pool, city officials began making plans for other improvements including new sports fields. On April 23, 1935, the city commission adopted a resolution to apply to the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee for the "construction of three ball fields, one quarter-mile tract and one standard football field," setting aside \$974.20 to help with the costs of the project.⁴

Wanting a stadium from which spectators could view football games, the City Commission unanimously adopted another resolution on August 6, 1935 "Providing for the Construction of a Stadium in Athletic Park." By that time, the amount of money the federal government was granting to state relief agencies had been reduced in anticipation that the federal WPA "would assume as rapidly as possible the responsibility of employment of all able-bodied relief clients."

With the KERC phasing out, the City Commission decided to apply to the WPA. The resolution authorized City Manager Knowland Brode to "prepare a project proposal in accordance with the requirements of the Works Progress Administration." Brode was the perfect man for the job. Like many city managers at the time, he had an engineering background, having served as a civil engineer for the Santa Fe Railway.⁸

On August 8, 1935, just two days following the City Commission's decision to apply to the WPA for the construction of the stadium, officials in Sumner County mailed the proposal to Washington, D. C. for Kansas' first WPA project. Understanding that Newton was competing with communities all across the nation for funding, Brode wasted no time. As soon as he received authorization from the City Commission Brode went about organizing the project, not only administering the early phases but also acting as the stadium's chief designer. Just three days after the City Commission's decision to pursue the project, in a meeting at the Ripley Hotel (1925), Brode presented his design to the Newton Civic Improvement Committee. Impressed with Brode's efficiency and encouraged by the number of people the project would benefit, the committee unanimously approved Brode's plans.

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Brode's concrete structure would cost an estimated \$23,258 and would accommodate 3,000 football, softball and special events' spectators. According to the *Newton Journal*, it would be "200 feet wide and about 24 feet high, with entrances at either end and by means of ramps from the north, or underneath the seats." Those seated in the stadium would face southward. On the north side, the building would have a band shell. "Beneath the stadium," boasted Newton's Democratic newspaper, "and in an additional width, would be room for an administration building for fair purposes and other public uses. Dressing rooms and showers for athletes would also be provided." 11

On October 18, 1935, just two months following the project's initiation, Newtonians received word from the office of Representative John M. Houston, a New Deal Democrat, "that the Works Progress administration had given final approval to the Newton stadium project at Athletic Park, and the funds had been allotted." Upon approval, the city arranged for the purchase of physician J. T. Axtell's half-mile horse-racing track in Athletic Park. By that time, most in the city were willing to replace the track with "cleaner" entertainment.

Construction began on the stadium on Monday, November 25, 1935. After Brode and assistant city engineer Max Dick lay the stakes for the project, the two turned the construction over to seventy-six relief workers. W. F. Thompson was named foreman of the project. Thompson supervised the work of eight carpenters, eight cement workers and sixty laborers. The men were paid according to construction skill, the carpenters earning \$52 per month, the cement workers \$44 and the laborers \$25 per 128-hour month. Those in charge planned "to push the work on the stadium as rapidly as possible while weather conditions permit[ed]."¹⁴

Relief workers were ready to begin concrete work on the stadium by December, 1935. "While waiting for steel and cement," noted the *Newton Journal*, "the men worked on leveling off the old race track" and grading driveways. Workers were finally able to pour footings for the stadium in January, 1936 after steel and concrete arrived from the Carter-Waters company of Kansas City and Truscon Steel Company of Wichita. The footings, noted the *Journal*, were "deep enough into the ground to insure carrying the immense weight" and were "200 feel long, with 51 heavy reinforced column footings." 16

After more than a year of anxious anticipation, the stadium was completed in summer 1936. It was dedicated at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, September 11, 1936. The event, part of the closing activities of the Harvey County Fair, was steeped in fanfare. H. W. Scott, commander of the local American Legion post served as master of ceremonies. Among the prominent people present was Congressman John M. Houston who delivered a dedicatory address. "If we have spent money we're proud of the fact because we have helped to provide for the needy and given work to thousands who were out of employment," noted Houston.¹⁷

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"Following the main address," noted the *Newton Journal*, "there was a brief sports demonstration with Newton high school football players and track men participating. The Newton high school and Newton Concert bands furnished music and the American Legion Drum and Bugle corps presented a short exhibition. The program closed with the audience singing the "Star Spangled Banner." 18

The stadium again drew a large crowd on Friday, September 25, 1936 when the Newton Railroaders football team hosted their first home game at the new stadium. One thousand spectators were present for the Railroaders' victory against the Emporia Spartans.¹⁹ Later, the stadium became the home stadium of the Bethel College football team. Throughout the years the stadium has also been host to special events such as the community's annual July 4th fireworks display.

The stadium has received some updated features since its construction in the 1930s but its overall appearance has remained faithful to the original design. In 1992 the football field was named "Fischer Field." The stadium remains an integral feature of Newton's recreational facilities and is the place that players, fans and spectators call "home."

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Endnotes

- ¹ Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, "Physical Accomplishments Reported From July 1, 1935 through June 1, 1939, Construction Projects Total for State," K 361 Un3wf, Research Library, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.
- ². Ibid.
- ³ Christy Davis, "Field Home to Newton's Sports History," Newton Kansan, 20 June 1998, 1.
- ⁴ Newton City Commission Minutes, 23 April 1935, Newton City Hall, Newton, Kansas
- 5. Newton City Commission Minutes, 6 August 1935, Newton City Hall, Newton, Kansas
- ⁶ "Kansas Given \$500,000 Relief," Newton Evening Kansan-Republican, 6 August 1935, 1.
- ⁷ Newton City Commission Minutes, 6 August 1935, Newton City Hall, Newton, Kansas.
- ⁸ "Deaths and Funerals: Knowland Locke Brode," Newton Evening Kansan-Republican, 22 September 1983, 14.
- 9. "First Kansas WPA Project is Ready," Newton Evening Kansan-Republican, 8 August 1935, 2.
- ^{10.} "Stadium Project Final Approval," Newton Journal, 24 October 1935, 1.
- 11. "Endorse Project for Park Stadium," Newton Journal, 15 August 1935, 1.
- ¹² "Stadium Project Final Approval," Newton Journal, 24 October 1935, 1.
- ¹³. "Partial Approval of Park Stadium," Newton Journal, 3 October 1935, 1.
- 14. "76 Men at Work on Park Stadium," Newton Journal, 28 November 1935, 1.
- ^{15.} "Material Contracts on WPA Projects," *Newton Journal*, 26 December 1935, 1; "Footings Poured for Park Stadium," *Newton Journal*, 9 January 1936, 1.
- 16. "Footings Poured for Park Stadium," Newton Journal, 9 January 1936, 1.
- ¹⁷ "City Stadium is Dedicated," Newton Journal, 17 September 1936, 1.
- ^{18.} Ibid.
- ¹⁹ "1936 Football Season Opens," Newton Evening Kansan-Republican, 25 September 1936, 10; "Newton High Won Close Game." Newton Evening Kansan-Republican, 26 September 1936, 6.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes the area on which the stadium building, two ticket booths and the football field are located. The property is located in Newton's Athletic Park on the SE4, SE4, 18-23-01E beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 12, Block 9, E793.21', S65', E 70', S 20', W 400', S245', W 200', S 410', W 200', and north to the point of beginning, less row.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the stadium, ticket booths and football field constructed by the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee and Works Progress Administration in 1935-36.